

Remarks

The Office Action dated November 29, 2000 has been noted, and its contents carefully studied. In light of the above amendment to the Application, reconsideration of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) and 103(a) is courteously requested.

Initially, it is noted that part of the rejection of the claims is based on a citation of 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,255,267 to Hansen. It is assumed that the Examiner has chosen to base the rejection on § 102(e) instead of other sections of 35 U.S.C. § 102 based on the amendment to § 102(e) which took effect one year after November 29, 1999, and which applied to all applications filed on or after that date. Based on this change in the law, it is assumed that by stating the claims are rejected as anticipated by Hansen under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), the Examiner is referring to the first part of § (e) and is relying on the statement in § 102(e) that the invention was described in a patent . . . before the invention thereof by the Applicant for patent. Thus, the response to the rejection will address Hansen in this context.

Turning again to the invention, particularly as recited in the previously-added new claims, as amended, there is provided an apparatus for bi-directionally transmitting and receiving RF modulated signals on a plurality of interconnected coaxial cable, which establish a complete network as set forth in claim 61. The apparatus, as noted, includes a multi-drop signal distribution apparatus having a source input for receiving RF modulated signals from a broadcast source, and a plurality of signal ports. Each port is adapted for receiving a plurality of modulated signals, including at least the RF modulated signals, and for receiving digital signals from associated ones through a plurality of coaxial cables connectable to each of the signal ports. The apparatus includes first circuit elements coupling RF broadcast modulated signals to be received at the source input to each one of the plurality of signal ports, and second circuit elements coupling RF modulated signals at each signal port, and any digital signals to be received at each signal port to each other signal port of the plurality of signal ports. Thus, such a distribution unit as defined allows bi-directional transmission and reception of RF modulated signals on a plurality of interconnected cables making up a complete network, throughout the complete network.

In an alternative aspect, as set forth in claim 67, there is provided an interface apparatus connectable to network appliances distributed in selected locations throughout a complete network, and connected to a source of RF modulated signals through associated

ones with a plurality of single conductor coaxial cables. The interface apparatus includes an RF modulator for transmitting the RF modulated signals and for generating an RF television channel on one of plural reserve spectrum channels from baseband audio and video signals receivable from an appliance to be associated therewith. A processing circuit is connected to the RF modulator for programming the modulator by sending bytes for initializing a picture carrier frequency, a sound subcarrier frequency and a video modulation depth. An impedance matching network is connected between I/O ports of the interface apparatus, which are connectable to an appliance and processing circuit, for providing an impedance value to signals at a connection to an appliance which approximates the characteristic impedance provided by coaxial cable.

The other independent and dependent claims define the comprehensive system and method of operation in which the two aforementioned aspects of the invention are deployed and again, the claims have been amended to clearly recite that the various units are interconnected over a complete network such that unmodulated digital signals can be exchanged between digital apparatus through a single conductor coaxial cable over the complete network.

It is noted that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 is a new ground of rejection based on a new reference. Having generally discussed the invention, it is also respectfully urged that the invention as defined now in the claims is clearly not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102, nor obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103, from the cited reference, as will become more clearly evident from the following detailed discussion of the reference which is presented herein for the Examiner's kind consideration.

U.S. Patent No. 5,255,267 to Hansen, et al

U.S.P. 5,255,267 to Hansen, et al (hereinafter Hansen) has been studied and it is respectfully urged that the invention as recited in the claims is not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and/or obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103 in light of the teachings of Hansen. More specifically, it is believed that the amendment to the claims clarifies that Applicants' invention as structured and defined in the claims is useful for bi-directionally transmitting and receiving RF modulated signal and interfacing appliances throughout an entire network in which all of the devices are interconnected by coaxial cable. This is not possible in accordance with the structure of Hansen as will become more clearly evident from the following detailed discussion.

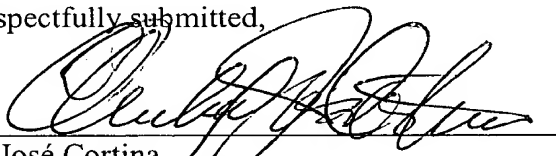
More specifically, referring to Figure 2, which appears to be what the Examiner has focused on, there is disclosed an RF broadband and baseband network. Transmission of broadband RF transmissions supports video devices 18 and RF telephonic devices 20, as well as personal computers 16. Tap devices 22 provides filtering and load impedance for coupling of signals two and from the network cable. However, the circuit arrangement of Hansen fails to allow coupling and transmission of signals from one branch of the network to another branch, including appliances connected on the other branch. Thus, with reference to Figure 2, looking at the farthest-most left Ethernet segment 12, it is not possible to transmit from Ethernet segment 12 through the bridge 24 to the immediately-arranged to the right Ethernet segment 12 shown in Figure 2. Hansen not only fails to provide the function provided by the claimed invention, but also fails to show the specific combination of elements/steps recited in Applicants' claims.

It is again pointed out that in one aspect, Applicants' inventions is an apparatus for bi-directionally transmitting and receiving RF modulated signals on a plurality of interconnected coaxial cables establishing a complete network. Each Ethernet branch 12 of Hansen is not a complete network and further, does not provide for transmission of RF modulated signals produced on the network. Each branch 12 has nothing but receivers, and it is not possible nor is it contemplated the features of the claimed invention where bi-directional transmission of RF modulated signals produced on the network is possible throughout the complete network. Bridge 24 prevents this type of bi-directional coupling, and instead, Hansen, if anything, teaches away from Applicants' claimed invention. In reviewing the rejection, it is clear that the Examiner has inventoried selected components disclosed in Hansen to reject the claims. What this approach fails to do is to show that the inventoried components are assembled in the manner required by Applicants' claims to provide the functionality of the invention.

Accordingly, it is respectfully urged that the Examiner has engaged in an impermissible hindsight interpretation of Hansen, selectively extracting from its teaching, in an attempt to arrive at Applicants' claimed invention. When Hansen is viewed alone, without knowledge of Applicants' claimed invention, it is clear that there is no direct teaching or obvious suggestion of the claimed invention. Thus, it is respectfully urged ~~that the rejection should be withdrawn.~~

Nonetheless, should the Examiner have any comments, questions, or suggestions of a nature necessary to expedite prosecution of the case, further clarify the distinctions between the claimed invention and the cited references, or to otherwise place the case in condition for allowance, he is courteously requested to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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